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Study | 26.10.2021

The socio-economic impacts of renewable energy in EU regions

A report commissioned by the Greens/EFA

The Climate Law and its strengthened 2030 greenhouse gas reduction target requires a substantial acceleration of RES deployment in the EU in the next years. Ensuring socio-economic benefits for local communities will be key to the social and political acceptability of this rapid energy transition.

While most of the literature on the economic effects of renewable energy is focused on the global or national levels, this report uses a semi-systematic literature review and 5 case studies to assess the evidence of socio-economic impacts associated with the deployment of renewable energy (RES) at the level of EU regions, and seeks to identify key factors that shape them.

The primary focus of the literature is on wind, followed by solar and bioenergy, while the major focus of socio-economic impact analysis is on employment, followed by GDP and value added, with broader indicators like health and wellbeing all but absent. Given the methodological diversity in the literature, as well as the wide range of regional contexts, the rapid development of the RES sector and policy frameworks and generally weak availability of data at regional level, care must be taken in extrapolating conclusions from one region to the next. Nonetheless the following headline findings have been identified in the literature, many of which are further supported by the case studies.

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Responsible MEPs



Niklas Nienass

Member

Contact person



Francesca Jenner

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